

10/27/04

Hello,

My name is Rick Staeb and I am the General Manager of the Cascade Radio Group, which is comprised of radio stations KGMI, KISM, KAFE, KPUG and KBAI licensed to Bellingham Washington.

I am filing my comments today regarding the FCC's localism concerns, MB Docket Number 04-233.

I must first preface my remarks with the fact that I become angry when individuals and groups paint with a broad brush that all radio stations are not locally involved with their communities either through their programming or their community activities. In the case of our group of stations, nothing is further from the truth.

Local News:

KGMI is the local news/talk station with 24/7 local newscasts along with 7 hours daily of local talk programming. On the weekends KGMI provides 3 hours of local talk programming. KISM, KAFE, KPUG and KBAI provide local newscasts seven days a week along with special news coverage of major local events such as the Bellingham Pipeline explosion several years ago or for national news events. KGMI is the local EAS for Whatcom County and all our stations participate in the Washington State Amber Alert system. During this recent political season, KGMI has interviewed candidates from the various races including congress, governor, state representatives, local judges as well as ballot issues during local talk programming and our news coverage. KGMI even sent a broadcast team to the Democratic and Republican National conventions to cover the local perspective on this national issue.

Local Sports:

KGMI, KPUG and KBAI broadcast local coverage of Western Washington University and 8 different high schools for sports such as football, basketball and baseball.

Community Involvement:

KGMI is often referred to by citizens of Whatcom County as the "community radio station" because of our daily involvement through our local programming. Our Group of stations just recently exceeded our goal of 80,000 lbs. of food by 45,000 lbs of donations in our annual community food drive. KAFE is the major media sponsor of the Relay for Life American Cancer Society fundraiser in which our staff is involved during the 24 hour broadcast from the event. KISM broadcast from 3 different communities outside our local county during last year's Toys for Tots drive.

Public Service Announcements:

Each and every day of the week our group of stations broadcast local public service announcements talking about the bake sales, the car washes the charity auctions, the blood drives, and the fund raising efforts of the area's non-profit organizations.

Employees:

Myself along with many of our employees are current and past board members of Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brother/Big Sister, Domestic Violence, Red Cross, Rotary and United Way organizations. When we are involved, the community will hear about these organizations through our radio stations.

We are serving the needs of our communities. You would expect to hear that from us, but just ask them the people of our communities and they will tell you the same thing, probably in a much grander fashion. Thank you for your consideration.